

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending in the application. The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-4, 6, 8-12, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Heskett et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,908,233). The Examiner also rejected claims 2, 13, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Heskett in view of Todd (U.S. Patent No. 3,034,000). The Examiner also rejected claims 5, 7, 14, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Heskett in view of Hugly (U.S. Patent No. 3,996,546). The Applicant has amended claims 1-11, 13, 15, and 17 by this amendment. Reconsideration of the claims in view of the remarks contained herein is respectfully requested.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness under Section 103, three basic criteria must be met. *M.P.E.P.* § 2143. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the references or to combine the reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, not in Applicant's disclosure. *See M.P.E.P.* § 2143.1. Moreover, it is improper to combine references where the references teach away from their combination. *See M.P.E.P.* § 2145. The Office's proposed combination of references does **not** meet the above criteria with respect to the subject matter of the claims.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-4, 6, 8-12, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Heskett et al. ("Heskett").

Amended independent claim 1 specifies a device for transforming the main supply voltage into a lower voltage. The device comprises a first male connector that can be

selectively plugged into a main supply socket, a second male connector that can be selectively plugged into a consumer, and an electronic circuit for transforming the voltage which is located between the two connectors, and wherein the electronic circuit forms with the second connector one rigid physical unit whereby the second connector is supported by the housing.

Heskett does not teach or suggest a device including a second male connector that can be selectively plugged into a consumer. Rather, Heskett discloses an automotive rechargeable flashlight including a base 12 with a weighted plate 14 to prevent movement of the base 12 when positioned on a floor of a vehicle. Col. 4, lines 11-15. The base 12 includes a recess 16 for receiving a flashlight 52. Col. 4, lines 16-17; col. 5, lines 10-12. The recess 16 includes a pair of contacts 18 positioned on the inner side wall. Col. 4, lines 16-18. The flashlight 52 also has a pair of contacts 58. Col. 5, lines 6-9. When the flashlight 52 is to be charged, it is positioned in the recess 16 such that the contacts 58 abut the contacts 18. Col. 5, lines 10-12. Heskett does not disclose that the contacts 18 are plugged into the flashlight 52. If the contacts 18 were meant to be plugged into the flashlight 52, the specification would have so indicated, because the specification indicates that a second end of a power cord 24 includes "a cigarette lighter adapter 28 designed to be releasably plugged within a vehicle cigarette lighter socket." Col. 4, lines 25-30.

In addition, the device 10 including the recess 16 and associated contacts 18 is not portable as it includes the weighted plate to prevent movement. Therefore, and as disclosed, Heskett requires that the flashlight 52 be inserted into the recess 16, which is in contrast to the language of claim 1.

In addition, the configuration of the present invention is advantageous over the prior art because it is handheld and portable, as illustrated in the drawings. The invention may be used with any consumer device and is not limited to one device, e.g., a flashlight as in

Heskett. Furthermore, the Heskett system is only operable with a modified flashlight that includes contacts. The Heskett system cannot be used with a standard off-the-shelf flashlight. Whereas, the present invention may be used with any off-the-shelf consumer.

For these and other reasons, Heskett does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter of independent claim 1. Accordingly, independent claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 3-4, 6, and 8-10 depend from claim 1, and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1.

Amended independent claim 11 specifies a device for converting a main supply voltage to a lower voltage. The device comprises a housing; a first male connector coupled to the housing, the first male connector operable to connect to a main supply voltage; and a second male connector supported by the housing, and being operable to plug into an electronic device. As noted above, Heskett does not teach or suggest a second male connector supported by the housing, and being operable to plug into an electronic device. In Heskett, the system 10 includes a recess 16 having contacts 18 and a flashlight 52 having contacts 58. Heskett does not disclose that the contacts 18 are plugged into the flashlight 52.

For these and other reasons, Heskett does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter of independent claim 11. Accordingly, independent claim 11 is allowable.

Claim 12 depends from claim 11, and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 11.

Amended independent claim 17 specifies a device for transforming the main supply voltage into a lower voltage. The device comprises a first connector that can be plugged into a main supply socket, a second connector that can be plugged into a consumer and an electronic circuit for transforming the voltage which is located within a housing between the two connectors, and wherein the second connector is supported by the housing. As noted

above, Heskett does not teach or suggest a second connector that can be plugged into a consumer. Accordingly, for this and other reasons, independent claim 17 is allowable.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103 Heskett and Todd references

The Examiner rejected claims 2, 13, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Heskett in view of Todd (U.S. Patent No. 3,034,000).

The Examiner indicates that Heskett does not disclose the “use of an on/off switch to control the supply of power to the electronic device.” *Office action dated March 24, 2003*, point 4. The Examiner also indicates that “it would have been an obvious matter of engineering design choice to use an on/off switch to control the supply of power to the electronic device, since applicant has not disclosed that the on/off switch solves any stated problem or is for any particular purpose and it appears that the invention would perform equally well with [a] switch used for the appliance adapter to control the flow of power [to] the load.” *Id.*

Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has failed to establish a prima facie case of obviousness with respect to claims 2, 13, and 15, which requires: (1) some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings; (2) a reasonable expectation of success; and (3) the art reference or combination of references must teach all of the claim limitations. *M.P.E.P.* § 2142. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, not in applicant’s disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991); *M.P.E.P.* § 2143.

Claim 2 depends from claim 1, and is therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1. Amended claim 2 specifies a device further comprising

an ON/OFF switch including one of an ON and an OFF state for supplying the line voltage to the consumer.

As noted above, Heskett does not teach or suggest the subject matter of claim 2. Todd does not cure the deficiencies of Heskett. Todd does not teach or suggest a device including an on/off switch for supplying the line voltage to the consumer. Rather, Todd discloses an appliance adapter including a slider switch 9 that changes the voltage selection based on the outlet voltage into which the adapter is plugged. The adapter is always "ON" when plugged into the outlet. The adapter does not include an on/off switch. Therefore, the combination of Heskett and Todd does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter of claim 2.

Additionally, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine the asserted reference teachings. The system 10 of Heskett includes a voltage adjuster 30 for stepping down a voltage received from the power cord. Col. 4, lines 31-35. There is no need to include a slider switch 9 of Todd that changes the voltage selection based on the outlet voltage, because it already exists in the system 10 of Heskett.

For these and other reasons, Heskett in combination with Todd does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter of dependent claim 2. Therefore, claim 2 includes additional patentable subject matter.

Amended claim 13 depends from claim 11, and is therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 11. Amended claim 13 specifies a device further comprising an ON/OFF switch coupled to the housing and operable to control the main supply voltage to the electronic circuit. As noted above, Todd does not teach or suggest the subject matter of claim 13. In addition, as noted above, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine Heskett and Todd.

For the reasons noted above, Heskett in combination with Todd does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter of dependent claim 13. Therefore, claim 13 includes additional patentable subject matter.

Amended independent claim 15 specifies a device for transforming a main supply voltage. The device comprises a housing including an electronic circuit for transforming the main supply voltage; a first electrical male plug coupled to the housing for connection with an electrical outlet supplying the main voltage; a second electrical male plug supported by the housing and adapted to plug into an electronic device; and an ON/OFF switch coupled to the housing to control the supply of voltage to the electronic circuit.

Heskett does not teach or suggest a second electrical male plug supported by the housing and adapted to plug into an electronic device. In Heskett, the system 10 includes a recess 16 having contacts 18 and a flashlight 52 having contacts 58. Heskett does not disclose that the contacts 18 are plugged into the flashlight 52.

Todd does not cure the deficiencies of Heskett. As noted above, Todd does not teach or suggest an ON/OFF switch coupled to the housing to control the supply of voltage to the electronic circuit. In addition, as noted above, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine Heskett and Todd.

For the reasons noted above, Heskett in combination with Todd does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter of claim 15. Accordingly, independent claim 15 is allowable.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103 Heskett and Hugly references

The Examiner rejected claims 5, 7, 14, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Heskett in view of Hugly (U.S. Patent No. 3,996,546). The Examiner indicates that Heskett does not disclose “the use of the interchangeability of the plugs for voltage adaptation for differing consumer devices.” *Office action dated March 24, 2003,*

point 5. The Examiner also indicates that it would have been an obvious matter of engineering design choice to use interchangeable plugs for voltage adaptation for differing consumer devices, since applicant has not disclosed that the use of interchangeable plugs for voltage adaptation for differing consumer devices solves any stated problem or is for any particular purpose and it appears that the invention would perform equally well with any type of interchangeable plugs adaptable to any one of numerous consumer devices. *Id.*

Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has failed to establish a prima facie case of obviousness with respect to claims 5, 7, 14, and 16, which requires: (1) some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings; (2) a reasonable expectation of success; and (3) the art reference or combination of references must teach all of the claim limitations. *M.P.E.P.* § 2142. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, not in applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991); *M.P.E.P.* § 2143.

Claim 5 depends from claim 1, and is therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1. Amended claim 5 specifies a device wherein the second connector is removable from the unit and can be changed by another connector.

As noted above, Heskett does not teach or suggest the subject matter of claim 5. Hugly does not cure the deficiencies of Heskett. Hugly does not teach or suggest a device wherein the second connector is removable from the unit and can be changed by another connector.

Rather, Hugly discloses a plug that is adaptable for connection to either a 220V or 110V main supply system and an appliance transformer. Col. 3, lines 18-30. The plug can only be removed from the appliance transformer or the main supply system. The plug is not

removed from a housing or unit. Therefore, the combination of Heskett and Hugly does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter of claim 5.

Additionally, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine the asserted reference teachings. The system 10 of Heskett includes a recess 16 having a pair of contacts 18 positioned on the inner side wall. Col. 4, lines 16-18. The recess 16 receives the flashlight 52, which also has a pair of contacts 58. Col. 5, lines 6-9. When the flashlight 52 is to be charged, it is positioned in the recess 16 such that the contacts 58 abut the contacts 18. Col. 5, lines 10-12. First, Heskett does not disclose that the contacts 18 are plugged into the flashlight 52, therefore having the ability to switch to different plug configurations, as in Hugly, is irrelevant for the system 10. Second, the flashlight 52 includes a battery that is recharged, and does not require a different plug configuration, as in Hugly, in order to be recharged.

For these and other reasons, Heskett in combination with Hugly does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter of dependent claim 5. Therefore, claim 5 includes additional patentable subject matter.

Claim 7 depends from claim 1, and is therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1. Amended claim 7 specifies a device wherein the electric line includes a third connector that is removable from the unit. As noted above, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine Heskett and Hugly.

For the reasons noted above, Heskett in combination with Hugly does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter of claim 7. Therefore, claim 7 includes additional patentable subject matter.

Claim 14 depends from claim 11, and is therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 11. Claim 14 specifies a device wherein the second

connector is releasably interchangeable with connectors having different connector layouts.

As noted above, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine Heskett and Hugly.

For the reasons noted above, Heskett in combination with Hugly does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter of claim 14. Therefore, claim 14 includes additional patentable subject matter.

Claim 16 depends from claim 15, and is therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 15. Claim 16 specifies a device wherein the second electrical plug is releasably interchangeable with electrical plugs having different electrical plug layouts. As noted above, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine Heskett and Hugly.

For the reasons noted above, Heskett in combination with Hugly does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter of claim 16. Therefore, claim 16 includes additional patentable subject matter.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, entry of the amendments and allowance of claims 1-17 are respectfully requested. The undersigned is available for a telephone consultation at any time.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas A. Miller
Reg. No. 36,871

Docket No. 041165-9014-00
Michael Best & Friedrich LLP
100 East Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202-4108
(414) 271-6560